
Philosophy 202

Introduction to Philosophy
Spring Semester 2008
Erling T. Teigen Instructor

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Required Text: Steven M. Cahn, *Exploring Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2005, 2nd Ed.
Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*, Bedford-St. martins, 2004, 4th edition

Course Objectives

The aims of this course are to:

Expose the students to the basic questions dealt with in philosophical inquiry.

Familiarize the students with philosophical categories and vocabulary.

Develop the student's ability to critically examine the presuppositions behind their worldviews and those of others, and to articulate this critical thinking.

Grading and course requirements

Exams 400 pts

Miscellaneous—abstracts, reading quizzes, and class work 200 pts

Attendance (minus 10 pts per absence)=100 pts

On the basis of a percentage of the entire point accumulation, the grade will be assigned as follows:

90-100%—A

80-89%—B

70-79%—C

60-69%—D

less than 60%—F

Class attendance and participation

Class attendance is strictly taken into account in determining the semester grade. There is no "cut policy." Any absences not accounted for by illness or other school activities will be subtracted from the one hundred point attendance allowance. A student may be dropped from the course after 6 unexcused absences. Since it is an important part of the learning process to make oral contributions to class discussions, to ask questions, and to offer insights, class participation is taken into account in determining the grade.

Written work

All assigned work must be completed in order to receive a grade (except for reading quizzes which cannot be made up). Papers must be handed in on time to receive full credit. Late papers will receive substantially lowered grades.

ABSTRACTS: For each major assigned reading the student must prepare a short abstract or reading summary which the instructor may ask to see at the beginning of the class hour or may collect at the end of the hour. The abstract is to be typed, between 100 and 150 words. The abstract states the central thesis of the article and summarizes (very concisely!) the argument of the writer. No evaluation or critique is required in the abstract. The abstracts, except in the case of illness, must be turned in on the day due—late abstracts, except in cases of *excused* absences, will not be accepted.

PAPERS: For each unit (Units 3 through 6) the student will prepare a short paper 4 or 5 pages (1000 to 1500 words). The papers are to be written using either the MLA or Chicago styles (See Hacker). The papers are due on the last day of each unit and may be summarized and discussed in class.

Class Procedures

Each class hour will consist primarily of a discussion of the assigned readings according to the

reading schedule below. From time to time, the instructor may lecture on background material. The class and group discussions will depend on student participation, which assumes that the scheduled material has been read. Each student is therefore required to have completed the required reading before the class hour begins.

Reading Schedule
Steven M. Cahn , Exploring Philosophy

1. Introduction

Week 1 January 14–18

What is Philosophy?, Monroe C. Beardsley and Elizabeth Lane Beardsley
Defence of Socrates, Plato

2. Reasoning

Weeks 2, 3 January 21–February 1

The Scope of Logic, Wesley C. Salmon
Improving Your Thinking, Stephen F. Barker
Fixing Belief, Morris R. Cohen and Ernest Nagel
Testing Hypotheses, Steven M. Cahn, Patricia Kitcher, and George Sher
Science and Common Sense, Ernest Nagel

3. Knowledge

Weeks 4–5 February 4–15

Meno, Plato
Meditations on First Philosophy, René Descartes
Appearance and Reality, Bertrand Russell
What Can I Know?, D.Z. Phillips
Knowledge and Belief Norman Malcolm
The Problem of Induction, Bertrand Russell
Will the Future Be Like the Past?, Frederick L. Will
An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, David Hume

4. Mind

Weeks 6,7 February 18–29

Meditations on First Philosophy, René Descartes
The Ghost in the Machine, Gilbert Ryle
The Mind as a Function of the Body, Richard Taylor
What Is It Like To Be a Bat, Thomas Nagel
Do Computer's Think? John Searle
Free Will or Determinism?, Steven M. Cahn
Free Will and Determinism, W.T. Stace

Unit I exam February 29

4. God

Weeks 8–10 March 3 – 28

Euthyphro, Plato

Summa Theologiae, Saint Thomas Aquinas

Meditations on First Philosophy, René Descartes

An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, David Hume

Does God Exist?, Ernest Nagel

Why God Allows Evil, Richard Swinburne

Theology and Falsification, Antony Flew and Basil Mitchell

Do Miracles Occur?, Monroe C. Beardsley and Elizabeth Lane Beardsley

Faith, Richard Taylor

Faith and Reason, Michael Scriven

5. Morality

Weeks 11–12 March 31 – April 11

The Challenge of Cultural Relativism, James Rachels

Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle

Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, Immanuel Kant

Utilitarianism, John Stuart Mill

How Not to Answer Moral Questions, Tom Regan

The Nature of Ethical Disagreement, Charles L. Stevenson

A Supreme Moral Principle?, Steven M. Cahn

Abortion, Joel Feinberg

Giving Birth, Virginia Held

Active and Passive Euthanasia, James Rachels

Active and Passive Euthanasia: A Reply, Thomas D. Sullivan

Choosing Death, Sidney Hook

Unit II Exam April 11

6. Society

Weeks 13,14 April 14 – 25

Crito, Plato

Democracy, John Dewey

Political Action: The Problem of Dirty Hands, Michael Walzer

Privacy, Charles Fried

The Death Penalty, Burton Leiser

Capital Punishment, Hugo Adam Bedau

Two Concepts of Affirmative Action, Steven M. Cahn

Are Quotas Sometimes Justified?, James Rachels

What Is a Liberal Education?, Sidney Hook

On Liberty, John Stuart Mill

7. Conclusion

Weeks 15,16 April 28– May 9

Phaedo, Plato

The Meaning of Life, Richard Taylor

The Value of Philosophy, Bertrand Russell

Unit III Exam

Final Exam Tuesday, May 13, 8:00 a.m.